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27 July 2009

## **MEDIA STATEMENT**

### **Blueprint provides the case to act on health reform**

The Australian Self-Medication Industry (ASMI), the industry body representing non-prescription consumer healthcare products, today welcomed key findings contained in the Final Report of the National Health and Hospitals Reform Commission, and urged the government to implement wide-ranging health reform.

The Executive Director of ASMI, Juliet Seifert, said the report sets out a compelling case for reform of the system including a much-needed program of preventative health.

“We now have a comprehensive report that sets out the problem. The important priority is that we get on with the job of doing something about it. There can scarcely be a better opportunity to embrace change and I would encourage the government to implement reforms in a timely manner,” Ms Seifert said.

“The report recognises the fundamental challenge that health resources are finite and that much can be done to encourage and support people to maintain good health through appropriate choices and preventative health strategies.

“It is very encouraging to see the increased focus on increased personal responsibility for health and wellbeing, and the role of individuals, communities, health professionals, employers and governments.

“The idea for a new national health promotion and prevention agency opens the way for a comprehensive program of self care, as has been successfully implemented in the UK, enabling individuals to take greater personal responsibility for health and wellbeing.

“ASMI supports measures to address preventative health and the treatment of chronic conditions as well as moves to improve access to a broader group of health professionals such as pharmacists, practice nurses, complementary medicine practitioners, physiotherapists and dieticians.

“There are many minor ailments and chronic conditions that can be self managed or treated by individuals in consultation with allied health professionals.

“By broadening the range of professional advice available at the primary point of contact, we can better cater to a range of community needs as well as taking some of the workload off over-stretched GP services,” Ms Seifert said.

Recent research commissioned by ASMI found that 15% of all GP consultations involve the treatment of minor ailments – the equivalent of 25 million GP consultations annually, or approximately 96,000 consultations per day.<sup>1</sup>

“It is clear that significant health resources are being devoted to coughs, colds and other conditions that could be effectively managed by a pharmacist, practice nurse or through

responsible self care.

“Steps to improve health literacy in the community and to address patient needs through expanded and effective electronic information are also welcome”.

“I commend the Commission on its report. Now we look forward to getting on with the job of putting it into practice,” Ms Seifert said.

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About ASMI: The Australian Self-Medication Industry (ASMI) is the peak industry body for the Australian self care industry representing consumer healthcare products including over-the-counter medicines and complementary medicines. ASMI’s mission is to promote better health through responsible self-care. This means ensuring that safe and effective self-care products are readily available to all Australians at a reasonable cost. ASMI works to encourage responsible use by consumers and an increasing role for cost-effective self-medication products as part of the broad national health strategy. [www.asmi.com.au](http://www.asmi.com.au)

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<sup>i</sup> *Minor ailment workload in general practice*, IMS Australia and New Zealand, November 2008